

Two notes on *Carduelis*

by COLLINGWOOD INGRAM

Received 5th September, 1964

ALBINISM IN THE REDPOLL

In regard to R. E. Scott's paper describing an instance of partial albinism in the Redpoll (*Carduelis flammea*) the following fact may be of interest. My father, who was a keen aviculturist and at one time possessed a unique collection of albino birds, once owned a wild-caught example of this species that was entirely white save for the crown of its head which was of a pale coppery hue where, in the type, it would have been red.

SISKINS FEEDING ON SEEDS OF EUCALYPTUS

In Andalucia the Siskin (*Carduelis spinus*) is a very uncertain winter migrant: in some years it is abundant and in others not one is to be seen. Indeed its visitations might be likened to the "irruptions" of Waxwings (*Bombycilla garrulus*) in England; they are equally unpredictable and, apparently, are likewise in no way connected with immediate climatic conditions. Its numbers, at any rate, do not necessarily increase as do those of Lapwing, Song Thrush, Robin and Skylark during exceptionally cold spells in northern Europe.

In the winter of 1961-62 there was a big invasion of Siskins into the coastal regions of southern Spain. Near Guadalmina a flock of 30 or 40 could regularly be observed on a roadway that passed under an avenue of tall eucalyptus trees (*E. rostrata*). The birds went there in order to feed on the minute seeds of this antipodean tree, large quantities of which had been shed on to the road's surface.

An early record of the Masked Shrike in Spain

by C. J. O. HARRISON

Received 30th September, 1964

The Masked Shrike, *Lanius nubicus* Lichtenstein, breeds in Asia Minor and in Greece, and migrates into east and central Africa. It rarely occurs further west. Etchécopar and Hüe (1964) record only one North African occurrence, at Philippeville, Algeria, in April. Mountfort (1958) records two sight records on the Coto Doñana in southern Spain in May, 1956, and states that the species had not been recorded before in Spain, but mentions that Howard Saunders thought he saw one at Gibraltar in 1873.

When a collection of skins and mounted birds made by the late Lt.-Col. H. C. Wade-Dalton, and housed at Hauxwell Hall, Leyburn, Yorkshire, was examined recently it was found to include a skin of a Masked Shrike, collected with other birds at Gibraltar in 1883. The identification was subsequently confirmed by comparison with material in the British Museum (Natural History). The bird was sexed as a female, and the plumage showed many immature characters suggesting that it was a first winter bird. It was collected at "Convent, Cork Woods, Gibraltar" on 12th January, 1883. This would appear to constitute the earliest substantiated record of its occurrence in those parts.

References:

- Etchécopar, R. D. and Hüe, F. 1964. *Les oiseaux du Nord de l'Afrique*.
Mountfort, G. 1958. *Portrait of a wilderness*.